NEWS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release
June 16, 1997

Contact: Thomas W. Sweeney
(202) 219-4150

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ada E. Deer Praises Rejection of Tribal Taxation

I was delighted and gratified that the House Ways and Means Committee rejected proposals to tax proceeds of tribal commercial enterprises. If enacted, it would have constituted a major reversal of federal Indian law and policy and would have wiped out tribal economies which are only now for the first time in American history beginning to show signs of economic growth. It would have been ironic indeed were the Congress to have undermined its own thirty-year effort to effect economic and business development in Indian Country just as these efforts were beginning to show some signs of progress.

I would like to thank those on both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans, who showed leadership in defeating this punitive action against tribes. To the 22 members who voted to reject federal taxation on American Indian tribal governments, I thank you for refusing to break faith with America's first peoples. Your vote serves to not only to reaffirm the solemn commitments this nation has made to American Indians, but reflects favorably on our nation as a whole. Great nations keep their word.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, Attorney General Janet Reno, and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin also deserve praise for defending the tribes' long-established position as members of this nation's Constitutional family. Tribes are governments and deserve to be treated as such. I am proud that the President and his Administration have demonstrated such a strong commitment to this principle.

I commend the following House members for their votes to reject tribal taxation: Rep. Xavier Becerra (CA); Rep Dave Camp (MI); Rep. Benjamin Cardin (MD); Rep. William Coyne (PA); Rep. Philip English (PA); Rep. William Jefferson (LA); Rep. J.D. Hayworth (AZ); Rep. Amo Houghton (NY); Rep. Nancy Johnson (CT); Rep. Barbara Kennelly (CT); Rep. Jerry Kleczka (WI); Rep. Sander Levin (MI); Rep. John Lewis (GA); Rep. Robert Matsui (CA);Rep. Michael McNulty (NY); Rep. Richard Neal (MA); Rep. Jim Nussle (LA); Rep. Jim Ramstad (MN); Rep. Charles Rangel (NY); Rep. Pete Stark (CA); Rep John Tanner (TN); and Rep. Karen Thurman (FL).

-DOI-